



Childhood Connections

December 3, 2024

Roads to Success

Throughout 2024, the Office of Childhood (OOC) will share “Roads to Success,” a collection of stories from professionals and higher education institutions. Stories from professionals feature achievements from people working in childhood programs such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. Stories from higher education institutions highlight colleges and universities who are using innovative methods to support and grow the early childhood workforce. There are many roads to success. It is important to highlight the varying and unique pathways professionals take and how higher education programs can pave the way. These stories are also available at the bottom of [the Early Connections webpage](#).



Photo Credit: Veronica Hoerrmann/UMKC

This month’s “Road to Success” focuses on Veronica Hoerrmann, the recipient of the Missouri Association for the Education of Young Children’s (MOAEOYC) Young Professional Award for 2024. Veronica was interested in working with children from a young age. Her mom was a paraprofessional at her elementary school, and she admired the work of her kindergarten teacher.

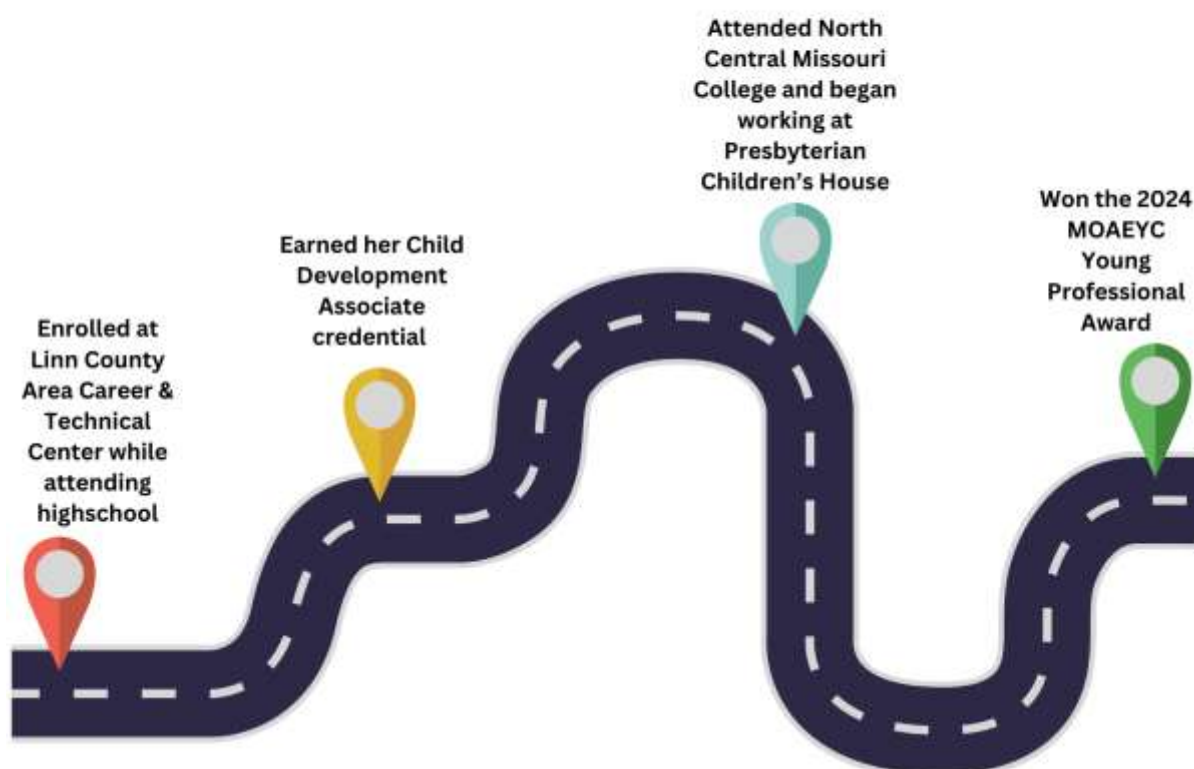
These influences inspired her to enroll in the Early Childhood Professions program at Linn County Area Career & Technical Center while attending Marceline High School. She earned her Child Development Associate credential, completing all the needed credits and work hours within the school year.

While attending North Central Missouri College (NCMC), she was offered a position at Presbyterian Children’s House, where she still teaches. She continues to take courses at NCMC, majoring in both Early Childhood Development and Elementary Education. In early 2024, Veronica was surprised

to learn she had been nominated for the MOAEYC Young Professional Award. She formally accepted the award at the 2024 Conference on the Young Years.

Veronica loves her job as the Lead Teacher for two- through five-year-olds because of the joy it brings her. She is reminded of the impact of her position every morning when the children enthusiastically come to greet her, as well as in the moments when she connects with former students who are continuing to succeed in their educational journey. She knows that early educators “leave a positive impact,” and encourages those who might be interested.

Here is what Veronica’s road to success looks like!



NEW! First Steps Year at a Glance Annual Report Posted

Each year the Early Intervention section publishes an annual report on the Missouri First Steps program.

[The Year at a Glance](#) shares First Steps family stories and program data, such as how many children received services in each county in Missouri, who refers children to First Steps, Annual Performance Report information that is shared with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), where children go when First Steps ends, and more.



NEW! Early Childhood State Advisory Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) will be held virtually on Tuesday, January 23, 2025, at 12:30 p.m.

The agenda and related presentation materials

In August 2024, the First Steps program celebrated 30 years of statewide early intervention services. To learn more about the First Steps program, visit [the Early Intervention webpage](#).

ANNOUNCEMENT! Missouri Parenting Partnership Program Contracts Awarded

The contracts for Missouri Parenting Partnership Program (formerly known as the Childhood Abuse and Neglect Prevention) have been awarded.

The program's regional boundaries are now aligned with Missouri's Parents as Teachers Parent Education Program to allow for collaboration and partnerships to be developed between the two statewide home visiting programs.

The contracts were awarded to three agencies: Lutheran Family and Children Services, Easterseals Midwest, and Area Resources for Community and Human Services. View [the regional map](#).

For more information, visit [the Home Visiting Updates webpage](#).

NEW! Required Trainings for Child Care Subsidy

will be posted on the [ECSAC meeting webpage](#) approximately one week before the meeting.

NEW! Resource for Behavioral Health Resources

The Department of Mental Health released a new Central Resources Hub to help the public, government officials, hospitals, and other organizations navigate assisting individuals with behavioral health services.

The new email and phone number serve as a single point of contact for non-emergency behavioral health inquiries and can provide guidance on navigating the behavioral health system. For more information view [the Resource Hub Flyer](#).

NEW! 2025 Powerful Learning Conference Registration Open

The Powerful Learning Conference provides professional learning to help educators implement effective, evidence-based practices that aim to improve learning for every student in every school district.

Registration is now open for the 2025 Powerful Learning Conference.

The conference will be held February 2-4, 2024,

OOC recently shared updated terms and conditions to reflect current federal requirements when contracting with the Child Care Subsidy program.

This update clarifies the timelines for completing the two new required trainings: (1) Milestones Matter with information about the five domains of childhood development, and (2) Caring for Vulnerable Children with information on homelessness and child abuse/neglect.

- Current child care staff members have until December 31, 2024, to complete these two additional trainings. OOC will not begin checking for compliance with these training requirements until later in 2025.
- New child care staff members hired on or after October 1, 2024, have 90 days from date of hire to complete required training, including these two new trainings.

Both trainings are available in the Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) system. For assistance with MOPD, contact mopd@dese.mo.gov or 573-526-8273.

NEW! Missouri Child Care Licensing Alignment Study

Using child care American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, OOC contracted with the University of Central Missouri, Early Childhood and Education Program, to complete [the Missouri Child Care Licensing Alignment Study](#).

This research project aims to describe Missouri child care licensing in comparison to neighboring states and best practices, illuminate strengths and challenges of current child care licensing practices, and provide research-based recommendations to guide decision making.

More information about this study and other child care related projects can be found on [the Child Care News and Updates webpage](#).

NEW! Child Development Associate (CDA) Reports in MOPD

Over the past year the OOC worked diligently with the CDA Council and National Workforce Registry Alliance to submit application materials and obtain

at Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach, MO.

[Visit the Powerful Learning webpage to view the conference brochure and to register.](#)

NEW! Research on Parents as Teachers (PAT) Parent Education Program

A research paper was recently published in the Early Childhood Research Quarterly that shows participation in the Missouri Parents as Teachers (PAT) Parent Education Program is positively associated with third-grade math and English Language Arts proficiency.

This research contributes to the literature on the importance of home visiting programs and is one of the few studies examining the effects of a voluntary, universal parent education program.

Read the [research paper in its entirety on ScienceDirect](#).

UPDATE! Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Webinar

OOC staff hosted the first webinar in a new, quarterly series for stakeholders and child care providers featuring topics related to Missouri's 2025-2027 CCDF State Plan on

their approval of new CDA Summary reports from the MOPD system.

These new CDA Summary reports will aid users who are applying for a Child Development Associate (CDA). The reports can be used to see if there are relevant results from previous training history that meet the 120 education clock hours required by the Council for Professional Recognition for a CDA.

These reports count in place of training certificates for CDA requirements and can easily identify which CDA content areas a user has completed training in. Obtaining a CDA credential may help users advance on their early childhood career pathway.

To learn more, look for the topic 'CDA Summary Reports' in the [MOPD instructions](#).

UPDATE! Subsidy Rate Charts

To help clarify the Micropolitan and Remainder of the State areas for child care subsidy payments, the name of all counties were added to the bottom of the 2023 and 2024 subsidy rate charts, as follows:

- [2024 Child Care Subsidy Rates](#) (Tab 1 is Daytime and Tab 2 is Evening/Weekend, effective July 1, 2024)
- [2023 Child Care Subsidy Rates](#) (Tab 1 is Daytime and Tab 2 is Evening/Weekend, effective July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024)

No other changes were made to the rate charts. Learn more about subsidy payments in the [Payment Calculation](#) informational document.

REMINDER! Background Checks: Myth vs Fact

Myth: DESE requires child care providers to have a background check on file before a First Steps early intervention provider can deliver services to a child at a child care program.

Fact: Per 210.1080, RSMo, child care staff members and volunteers are required to have a background check completed prior to providing child care. First Steps providers are not considered child care staff members. All First Steps providers undergo a comprehensive background check prior to being enrolled and providing services. All First Steps providers must also complete an annual Family Care Safety Registry screening.

Wednesday, November 20, 2024.

This webinar covered information about CCDF State Plan Updates, Subsidy Agreement Terms and Conditions, and Licensing Indicator System.

You can review the [recording](#) and a copy of the [PowerPoint slides](#) if you were unable to attend.

The next CCDF webinar will be in February 2025.

REMINDER! Growing Healthy Communities Podcast

[The Growing Healthy Communities podcast](#) is presented by the [Department of Mental Health Children's Office](#) with the goal of helping parents and community members better support youth in Missouri.

Licensed professionals and individuals with lived experiences will present topics that address the needs of youth and families in Missouri identified by parents, caregivers, and community members.

Recent episodes include a parent talking about their family's journey through learning their child has a disability and a discussion on the power of positive opportunities, resiliency, self-love, and healthy relationships.

All First Steps providers undergo a comprehensive background check prior to being enrolled and providing early intervention services. Also, all First Steps providers must complete an annual Family Care Safety Registry screening.

Therefore, DESE does not require a background check to be on file at the child care program for First Steps providers to deliver early intervention services at a child care program.

Learn more about child care requirements on [the Child Care Background Check Process webpage](#).

REMINDER! All Children Under Age 6 Should be Screened for Lead Risk Factors

Lead can harm a child's growth, behavior, and learning ability. All children under age 6 should be screened for lead risk factors at their well-child checks. Children under age 6 should also be tested if they are high-risk.

All parents of a child under the age of 4 should be provided with lead education annually and every child under the age of 4 should be offered a lead test annually. Other children should be tested if a sibling is in the home with an elevated blood lead level.

For additional information and to ask questions about the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, visit [DHSS's Lead Poisoning webpage](#).

For more information, email Teresa.Wortmann@health.mo.gov or Maggie.Burns@health.mo.gov, or call 573-751-6102.

ANNOUNCEMENT! Save the Date for CY 2025!

RESOURCE! Tips for Talking with Parents About Child Development

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) offers many resources to help early childhood professionals engage with parents on a child's development.

[Tips for Talking with Parents about Child Development](#) provides examples discussing a child's development.

[Tips for When There's a Developmental Concern](#) provide resources to support conversations with parents about their child's development.

ANNOUNCEMENT! Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Missouri is celebrating one year of providing free books for Missouri children. A dashboard of accomplishments for the first year can be found on the [OOC Imagination Library webpage](#).

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available for every child ages birth to 5 years in Missouri. A parent or guardian can register their child on [the Imagination Library national webpage](#). Books will be mailed directly to the home of registered

children at no cost to the family.



DESE will host the 52nd Annual Conference on the Young Years (CYY) March 6-8, 2025, at the Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach, MO.

Vendors and exhibitors can apply for booth spaces at [the CYY webpage](#). Sponsorships are available. Registration for attendees and presenters will open in December.

Monthly MOPD Quick Tip

Individuals can check their current clock hours for the year by reviewing the 'My Professional Development Learning Record' in the MOPD System.

- This report can be accessed from the user's dashboard by clicking on 'View Reports' at the bottom of the dashboard.
- To view compliance for previous years, scroll to the bottom of the report.

Administrators who have access to an Organization Profile in MOPD may use the Staff List to see staff members' training hours for the current year. On the Organization's profile page, go to the reports tab and click the Staff List. The timeframe of the report can be changed by entering a different date range at the top; then click View Report on the far-right side.

- This report displays a list of employees and their training hours completed for the date range selected.
- This report is not used to verify compliance because it does not ignore duplicate courses or reflect courses used to satisfy previous years compliance.

All users must have an active MOPD membership and be connected and verified by an employer for compliance calculations. An organization's Staff Report runs compliance calculations that the Staff List report does not. To view the full MOPD instructions for reports [visit the MOPD webpage](#).

Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.



Photo Credit: The Fordland Early Childhood Center

The Fordland Early Childhood Center recently earned recognition as the 2024 Early Childhood Education Program of the Year from Future Builders, the educational foundation of the Missouri School Boards Association (MSBA).

This award recognizes dedicated educators and staff, and their impact on their community. Tonia Nunn, Early Childhood Directory at Fordland Elementary, highlighted five key areas that contributed to their success: support for child development, innovation, parent and community involvement, leadership commitment, and school readiness.

The Fordland Early Childhood Center is also a recipient of a Missouri Quality Prekindergarten (MOQPK) LEA Grant and a Preschool Start-up Grant, both provided by OOC. The Preschool Start-up Grant allowed for the purchase materials and supplies. The MOQPK-LEA grant provided funding for high quality preschool in the Fordland R-3 School District.

The Fordland Early Childhood Center serves approximately 50 students, offering a full-day preschool for four-year-olds and a half-day program for three-year-olds. The center expanded its offerings by opening a second full-day preschool classroom, made possible with the MOQPK grant.

They also provide access to Parents as Teachers, and partner with other organizations in their community. The center has a full-time, free Parents as Teachers Parent Education Program representative focusing on helping families connect to educational and other resources and community members volunteer to read to in classrooms, supply snacks, and provide supplies for celebrations.

The Fordland Early Childhood Center says that the success of the center has been a community effort. Nunn said, "This recognition from the MSBA ... it's a big deal. It all comes down to our people. We've got top-notch educators and staff here at Fordland. They love kids. They show up each and every day for our kiddos. It's a pleasure to be around them, and our success here is because of them."

UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant



The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month, the OOC hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A [recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the November 2024 webinar are available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [October 2024](#)
- [September 2024](#)
- [August 2024](#)
- [July 2024](#)
- [June 2024](#)
- [May 2024](#)
- [April 2024](#)

The [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

OOC will not host a stakeholder webinar in December. We wish you a happy holiday season!

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on **Tuesday, January 28, 2025**, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at Childhood@dese.mo.gov.

Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

[Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.](#)

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